

BENEFITS NEWS

An Information Publication for State of California Employees

State Merit Award Program

Since 1950, the Merit Award Program has paid cash awards to State employees who suggest ways to cut State costs and/or improve safety. Awards range from \$50 to \$50,000. In 2001, implemented suggestions saved the State more than \$7 million.

If you're an active or retired State employee, this is your chance to help your fellow taxpayer and receive recognition in the process. Submit your ideas today!

- ✓ Download form from www.dpa.ca.gov.
- ✓ Complete and sign Form Std. 645.
- ✓ Submit your ideas to your designee.

Every department has a designee who processes and evaluates employee suggestions. Departments are allowed to make awards of less than \$5,000 directly to suggesters. Awards in excess of \$5,000 require approval of DPA's Merit Award Board. Suggesters' names remain confidential until their idea is adopted.

In addition to the Employee Suggestion Program, the Merit Award Program oversees the Superior Accomplishment Award and the Medal of Valor.

Additional information is available on the DPA Web site at www.dpa.ca.gov (click on Benefits/Awards).

Recent Awardees

(individual names have been omitted)

Correctional Counselor I

The Department of Corrections received \$48,426 based on documented savings of \$484,260. The award was for the development of a computer program to standardize Institutional Staff, which led to two automated forms (CDC 816 and 816A).

Employment Development Supervisor I

The Employment Development Department received \$50,000 based on documented savings of \$2 million. The award was for a recommendation to revise the Continued Claim Forms process by streamlining the handling of the forms, which also resulted in scanning the DE 4581.

Sergeant and Officer

The California Highway Patrol received \$11,142 based on documented savings of \$222,825. The award was for development of an interactive, automated training data system that tracks training of all employees in the department.

Office Service Supervisor

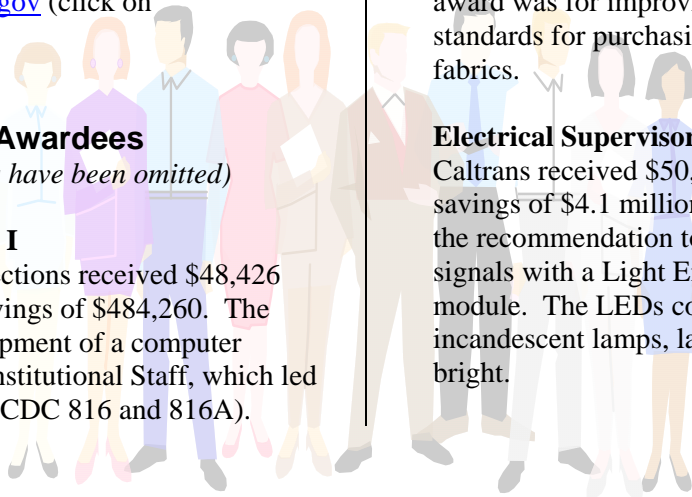
The Department of Motor Vehicles received \$17,011 based on documented savings of \$170,112. The award was for a recommendation to use onsite certified mail forms to send notices of driver license suspension and revocation notices as required by law. The forms, provided free of charge by the U.S. Postal Service, are compatible with the automated equipment.

Product Engineer Technician

The Prison Industry Authority received \$12,474 based on documented savings of \$124,741. This award was for improving a process to use standards for purchasing (versus bids) for chair fabrics.

Electrical Supervisor

Caltrans received \$50,000 based on documented savings of \$4.1 million. This award was based on the recommendation to replace red lights in traffic signals with a Light Emitting Diode (LED) module. The LEDs consumed less power than the incandescent lamps, last longer, and are just as bright.



Wellness Tip:

Increase Your Daily Physical Activity for Better Health

Did you know that physical inactivity is a major risk factor for developing coronary artery disease, stroke, high blood pressure, non-insulin dependent diabetes, and obesity?

Regular physical activity is a key factor in leading a healthy life and reducing obesity and other chronic illnesses. Consistent daily physical activity of at least 30 minutes reduces your risk of developing or dying from some of the leading causes of illness and death in the United States. Regular exercise can also improve your mood and help you manage stress better. Those who are already physically active will benefit even more by increasing the intensity or duration of their efforts.

If it's hard to find the time to workout, look for ways to add physical activity into your day. You could park your car farther away, take the stairs instead of the elevator, play outside with your kids, garden, dance, bicycle, start a walking club with family, friends or co-workers, or take several brisk 10-15 minute walks throughout the day to help meet the 30-minute activity goal. All this time adds up throughout the day and will help you reap the benefits of regular physical activity.

To lose weight and keep it off, accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity most days of the week. Sound nutrition is also necessary to increase fitness, control weight, and improve health.

The DPA California WorksWell Health Promotion Program encourages all State employees to be aware of their health and to take steps to maintain or improve it. To help meet physical activity goals, the DPA Statewide Health Promotion Program has contacted several health clubs and fitness centers employees have expressed interest in throughout California to arrange for discounts.

To find out which clubs offer State employees reduced enrollment fees, reduced membership rates or both, go to the California WorksWell Health Promotion Program Web site at www.dpa.ca.gov/benefits/health/wellness/wellmain.shtm and click on Health Club Offers. The Web site also offers several other links to information and resources on diabetes, fitness, health, and smoking cessation.

For More Information Contact

Benefits Division
(916) 322-0300
CALNET 492-0300

ARAG Group
Group Legal Services Plan
1-800-247-4184

State Dental Program
(916) 324-0525
CALNET 454-0525

State Employee Assistance Program
MBC (Merit Behavioral Care)
1-800-632-7422

State FlexElect Program
(916) 327-6429
CALNET 467-6429

Health Promotion Program
(916) 324-9398
CALNET 454-9398

Merit Award Board
(916) 324-0522
CALNET 454-0522

Pre-Tax Parking Program
(916) 324-0526
CALNET 454-0526

Rural Health Care Equity Program
(916) 327-1439
CALNET 467-1439

Savings Plus Program
1-866-566-4777
www.dpa.ca.gov/contactsp/

Vision Service Plan
(916) 445-9841
CALNET 485-9841

Workers' Comp. Program
(916) 445-9792
CALNET 485-9792

Fax Numbers

Benefits Division
(916) 322-3769
CALNET 492-3769

Savings Plus Program
(916) 327-1885
CALNET 467-1885

TDD (Any unit in DPA)
(916) 327-4266
CALNET 467-4266

Internet Address
www.dpa.ca.gov